Aristotle's Theory of Comedy

Dr. Essam El-Din Abu El-Ela

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Gratitude and Appreciation

I extend my profound thanks and sincere appreciation to two venerable professors, whose favor I shall never forget as long as I live:

- Professor Dr. Fawzi Fahmy Ahmed
  Under whom—despite his heavy responsibilities—I first studied Aristotle's *Poetics*.

- Professor Dr. Galal Ali Hafez
  Under whom I studied the works of Aristotle's commentators.

In recognition of their generous kindness, for without them this study would never have seen the light of day.

From the Works of Greek Philosophers Before Aristotle

“I see nothing but transformation and change. Do not deceive yourselves, and do not blame the reality of things (…) You impose names upon things, as if they would remain eternal. The river into which you descend for the second time is not the same river into which you descended the first time.”
(Heraclitus)

“If you proposed to release me on the condition that I give up the search for truth, I would say to you: I thank you, O Athenians. But I prefer to obey the will of the god, who, I believe, has prepared me to carry out this mission (…) I do not know what death may be; perhaps it is a good thing, so I neither fear it nor dread it. But I am certain that to cease from performing one’s mission is an evil beyond all doubt. Therefore, I prefer what may well be good to what I know is evil.”
(Socrates)

Introduction

Aristotle (c. 384–322 B.C.) (1)* promised the reader of his treatise on poetry (2)* that he would write a separate study on comedy, saying:

“As for the discussion of epic, and of comedy, we shall postpone it for another time.” (3)*

This indicates that Aristotle intended to write an independent study on comedy, just as he wrote his two valuable studies on tragedy and epic. Then we find him noting in his *Rhetoric* that he had fulfilled his promise to write about comedy, saying:

“We have discussed the subject of the laughable separately, in the book *On the Art of Poetry*…” (4)*

And also: “We have mentioned in the *Poetics* how many kinds of jesting there are, some of which befit the noble man, and others do not befit him…” (5)*

This leaves us with no doubt that Aristotle wrote a separate chapter on comedy in his *Poetics*. But in reality, only two studies have reached us from that book: the first on tragedy, and the second on epic.

This led many scholars specializing in the Greek language and its literature, as well as other students of the art of literature and its criticism, to strive to formulate theoretical conceptions of Greek comedy. In this endeavor, they divided into two camps:

The first: theorized about the comic dramatic art by constructing a conception mirroring Aristotle’s theorization of the tragic dramatic art (6)*.

The second: set out to construct a theoretical conception of comic dramatic art by extrapolating the theory of comedy from the extant texts of Greek comic drama, alongside the aid of certain historical documents discovered at a late date (7)*.

Upon careful examination of these two attempts, we find that the first: has departed from the sphere of sound scientific study, because its researchers relied on Aristotle's theory of tragedy, and thus fell into a fallacy whose implication is: treating comedy from a perspective that assumes—without proof—an opposition to tragedy.

As for the second camp: they relied on virtually the same material that Aristotle relied upon when constructing his theory of comedy. By material here, we mean those dramatic comic texts created by the pens of Greek comic writers, such as Aristophanes (c. 445–385 B.C.) and Menander (c. 341–293/289 B.C.). However, the researchers of this camp stopped at the boundaries of their own theorization; therefore we can say that this theoretical attempt belongs to them, and it would be an injustice to attribute it to Aristotle.

Regarding the importance of this study, we believe that Aristotle's theorization about comedy is no less important than his theorization about the tragic art, because both reflect for us Aristotle's general philosophy—intellectual and aesthetic—that governs the Greek dramatic text. Indeed, Aristotle is regarded as the first to study the theatrical art in a philosophical study possessing its own value in the history of dramatic criticism, so much so that many who came after him—poets, critics, and philosophers—relied upon his theorization in the folds of their critical studies. Hence they came to be known as (the Commentators on Aristotle).

It is worth mentioning that in presenting this brief study, we adopt the descriptive method, addressing the treatment of the study through several axes:

- The nature of imitation in comedy.
- The emergence and development of comedy.
- The qualitative elements of comedy.
- The quantitative parts of comedy.
- The sources of the laughable in comedy.
- The function of comic dramatic poetry.
- The definition of comedy.

This follows the pattern of the fundamental axes upon which Aristotle based his presentation of his theory of tragedy.

As for the material upon which we have relied in constructing this study, its sources are:

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1. The scattered passages that Aristotle provided about dramatic poetry in general and comedy in particular in his treatises on poetry and rhetoric.

2. The available specialized studies that have extrapolated the qualitative elements and quantitative parts from the Greek comic texts, with the aim of securing the benefit desired from this study.

We wish to note here that we have relied on Professor Dr. Ibrahim Hamada's translation of the *Poetics*, which he translated from English, because of its accurate translation, sound wording, and easy expression, in addition to the translator's specialization in the subject of translation. We have also indicated the locations of the selected Aristotelian passages in two other Arabic translations: that of Professor Dr. Shukri Muhammad Ayyad—from the Greek, and that of Professor Dr. Abd al-Rahman Badawi—from the Greek.

And we have indicated the same locations in Butcher's English translation, preceded—by one page—by the same locations in the Greek original, thus showing the points of difference in all these translations where they exist. We have made this clear through a study of the Greek passages in the study's appendix, using the same footnote numbers.

And from God alone comes success.

Essam El-Din Abu El-Ela

Cairo, 23/8/1992

The Nature of Imitation in Comedy

Aristotle opens his study of imitation (8)* by defining the relationship between it and human nature, saying:

“It appears that poetry—generally speaking—has originated from two causes, both of which are rooted in human nature:

1- Imitation is innate and is inherited by man from his childhood; and man differs from all other living beings in that he is the most disposed to imitation, and through it he acquires his first knowledge.

2- Man also, on the whole, takes pleasure in works of imitation. The evidence for this is experience: for though we may be pained by seeing certain things, we enjoy seeing those very same things when they are represented in a work of art by an accurate imitation—such as the shapes of the lowest kinds of animals and corpses. This is further made clear by another fact, namely that learning affords the greatest pleasure; not to philosophers alone, but to all other men, however small their share of it. And the reason why man delights in seeing a picture is that he learns from it (9)*; as he contemplates it, he acquires information, or infers what it signifies, and perhaps says: ‘This is an image of so-and-so.’ Even if it happens that he has never before seen the original of the thing represented, still, in that case, the pleasure will not be due to the image as imitation, but to the excellence of the execution, or the coloring, or to some other similar cause” (10)*.

Then Aristotle proceeds to establish a clear classification of the forms of imitation in poetry, according to the system of elements of which it is composed, saying:

“Epic poetry, and Tragedy, as well as Comedy, and the art of writing dithyrambs, and the greater part of music for the flute and the lyre—all of these are, generally speaking, forms of imitation. But, nevertheless, each kind differs from the others in three respects:

1- Either by a difference in the medium, 2- Or in the object, 3- Or in the manner" (11)*.

1- The medium of imitation in comedy: Aristotle clarifies the difference between the forms of imitation in poetry by explaining their medium, saying: "There are some arts that employ (…) rhythm, melody, and verse" (12)*. Among these: dithyrambic poetry, nomic poetry, and likewise tragedy and comedy. Yet the difference among these arts lies in that the first two use all three of these means simultaneously, while the latter two use them only in separate parts" (13)*.

2- The object of imitation in comedy: Aristotle addresses the object of imitation in poetry—in general—classifying forms of imitation according to the nature of their objects, saying: "Since those who imitate, imitate men in action, and these men must necessarily be either good or bad (for differences in character, almost without exception, are reduced to this distinction alone; and men differ in their characters according to goodness and badness), those who imitate therefore represent men either as better than we commonly know them, or worse, or just as they are on the ordinary level" (14)*.

Then, after this general discussion of poetry, he proceeds to discuss imitation in dramatic poetry in particular, in both its comic and tragic forms, saying:

"Comedy, then, represents men as worse than we commonly know them, while tragedy represents them as better than they are in reality…" (15)*.

Translators and scholars differ among themselves in determining the meaning of (the bad character) and the concept of (the good character), whereas Aristotle clarifies all of this in detail in his *Rhetoric*, saying:

"The motives that drive people to inflict harm and commit evil deeds are: baseness and lack of self-control. For if a man possesses one vice or more, then, in that wherein he is base, he reveals himself as unjust. For example: the miser with respect to money; the profligate with respect to bodily appetites; the effeminate with respect to what invites laziness and slackness; the coward with respect to dangers—for terror makes him abandon his brothers in peril; the ambitious with respect to his longing for honor; the hot-tempered with respect to anger; the contentious with respect to victory; the spiteful and vengeful with respect to revenge and punishment.

The silly and stupid with respect to being deceived about what is right and wrong; the shameless with respect to his contempt for the opinions of others. Likewise, every other man is unjust with regard to a particular weakness of his own" (16)*.

We observe from the preceding passage that Aristotle does not classify persons according to their social standing, but according to their ethical system. And since the law of the state—with its customs and traditions—represents the general ethical standard, there necessarily exist people who bear an ethical system higher than the general standard, people whose system does not differ from that standard, and people who bear an ethical system lower than the general standard. We can conclude from the above that the object of imitation in comic dramatic poetry consists in actions performed by people characterized by a particular weakness in their ethical system (17)*. Among these traits, from Aristotle's viewpoint, are: baseness, recklessness, miserliness, profligacy, cowardice, arrogance… etc.

3- The manner of imitation in comedy:

Aristotle then moves on to talk about the manner of imitation, as one of the criteria that differentiate the various forms of imitation, saying:

"There is still a third difference that distinguishes these arts, namely the (manner) in which any given object may be imitated. For by employing the same medium, and treating the same subjects, the poet can achieve his imitation:

1- Either by using narrative partly, and partly assuming another character than his own, then reporting the speech on its tongue, as Homer used to do (18)*. 2- Or by speaking in his own person, without making any such change (19)*. 3- Or by presenting the characters as they perform all their actions in a dramatic fashion (20)*.

Thus, the manner of imitation in comedy consists in the poet: "presenting the characters as they perform all their actions in a dramatic fashion" (21)*.

And since the objects of imitation in comedy are men worse than we commonly know them, and this badness is defined by a set of bad ethical systems, the action performed

dramatically in the comic work is necessarily a visible embodiment that exposes these ethical systems; that is, they will necessarily be low actions.

The Emergence and Development of Comedy

Aristotle frankly informs us of the lack of sufficient material to trace the origin of Greek comedy—in terms of time, place, and its founders—saying:

"While we know the successive changes that occurred in the stages of tragedy's development, and also know the names of those by whom these changes were carried out, we do not know this with regard to comedy, because it was not taken seriously from the beginning. The archon (21)* did not officially permit a comic poet a chorus of comic players until a late date. Until that time, the actors worked merely as volunteers. Moreover, people do not mention the poets called comic until after comedy had acquired its final form. Despite this, we do not know the name of the first who provided it with masks, or introduced prologues, or increased the number of its actors, and the like…" (22)*.

Therefore, Aristotle endeavors to apply his thought to attain the lowest possible degree of knowledge about how comedy originated and developed. He sees that Homer is:

"the first who outlined for us the basic characteristics of comedy by treating the laughable material in a dramatic manner (23)*, instead of writing personal satire, and accordingly his poem (Margites) (24)* bears the same relation to comedy as the (Iliad) and (Odyssey) bear to tragedy" (25)*.

And Aristotle does not content himself with presenting this belief about the origin of comedy, but investigates the same matter from the very beginning, where poetic creation in general arises, starting from his idea about the concept of imitation on the one hand, and the abstract concept of the process of development on the other, saying:

"Since imitation is innate in our nature (…) those who were naturally endowed with it proceeded from the very beginning to develop their simple attempts gradually, until poetry was produced from their improvisations…" (26)*.

Thus, Aristotle arrives at the conclusion that:

“Tragedy originally arose—just as comedy did—from an improvisational origin (…) The origin of comedy goes back to the leaders of the phallic songs…” (27)*.

After Aristotle has reached the conclusion that the origin of comedy was originally improvisational, he moves on to examine the relationship between imitation as a concept and the human nature of the imitating poet, saying:

“Poetry took two directions according to the nature of each poet: those of a serious and grave nature imitated noble actions and the deeds of good men, while those of a mean or ordinary nature imitated the deeds of the bad, and thus they first composed invectives, whereas the serious natures composed hymns to the gods and encomia for famous men. Indeed, we do not know any poem of that kind that can be attributed to any poet who appeared before Homer; although it is thought that many poets composed such poems. Nevertheless, we have examples from Homer onward. And we can point to the poem (Margites) and similar poems in which the appropriate meter appeared, which is still called iambic—or the satirical meter—which people use to revile and satirize one another. Thus, the ancient poets distinguished themselves either by heroic poetry or by iambic satirical poetry…” (28)*.

Thus Aristotle arrives at the idea that the innate nature of the poet is what directed him toward his particular mode of imitation; hence those of a mean or ordinary nature turned to writing (invective), imitating the deeds of the bad. Then he continues to elaborate on his exposition of the idea of development in comic dramatic poetry, saying:

“When tragedy and comedy appeared on the scene, each group of poets adhered to its own nature: that is, some of the satirical poets became writers of comedy, while some of the epic poets became teachers of tragedy. For these new dramatic forms were considered grander than the older forms that preceded them…” (29)*.

Here Aristotle leads us to the statement that the satirical poets are the fathers of the comic poets, and that the comic poetic work is an artistic form developed from the satirical poetic work. Then he discusses a number of opinions he heard, which attribute to their people the credit for inventing dramatic poetry in its two types, tragic and comic, saying:

“The Dorians (30)* claim that they are the ones who invented tragedy and comedy: not only those Megarians (31)* dwelling in the motherland of Greece—who claim that comedy arose during the period when they were governed democratically—but also the Megarians residing in Sicily; this is based on the argument that the poet Epicharmus (32)*, who—

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lived long before both the poet Chionides (33)* and Magnes (34)*—belongs to Sicily” (35)*.

It is clear from the preceding passage that Aristotle disapproves of Epicharmus being the founder of the comic art, and refutes the opinion of the Megarians by pointing out that two known comic poets, Chionides and Magnes, preceded him by a long time in writing comedy.

And Aristotle goes on to present what he has heard of opinions concerning the birthplace of dramatic poetry in its two types, saying:

“As for tragedy, its invention was also claimed by some Dorians in the Peloponnese. Their argument rests on the origin of the words (Comedy) and (Drama). They use their Dorian word (komai) for the small villages in the suburbs of cities, while the Athenians call them (demoi). Hence they claim that the name given to (comedians) is derived from the word (komazein), meaning ‘to revel noisily.’ But it is derived from the word (komai), meaning the small outlying villages (36)*, among which they used to move, because the city dwellers despised them and chased them away…” (37)*.

Moreover, he still reviews for us the claim of the Dorians, saying: “In addition to this proof, the Dorians assert that the word for (to do) in the Dorian language is (dran), while the word for to do among the Athenians is (prattein)…” (38)*.

We note from the two preceding passages the true position of Aristotle toward what he heard—a position characterized by neutrality of presentation. This is because both claims lack a logical foundation that would make them worthy of belief. Aristotle lacks here the genuine historical material that would enable him to investigate the origin of Greek comedy in a manner relying on the credibility of the historical material presented. Then he moves from his talk about the birthplace of comedy to convey what he heard concerning the plot, saying:

“As for the invention of plots, it is said that it began in Sicily with Epicharmus and Phormis (39)*. And Crates (40)* was the first poet among the Athenians to abandon the iambic or scurrilous satirical form and turn to the treatment of plots of a more general nature…” (41)*.

Moreover, some studies differ in determining the origin of Greek comedy—in terms of time, place, and its founders—and in outlining its stages of development (42)*.

The Qualitative Elements of Comedy

Aristotle holds that dramatic work in general—not tragedy alone (43)*—contains six elements (44)* in its construction, stating:

"In every tragedy—as a unified whole—there are six elements, which determine its specific character and qualitative value. The elements are: 1- Plot 2- Character 3- Language 4- Thought 5- Theatrical spectacle 6- Song

Two (elements) of these constitute the medium of imitation, one (element) represents the manner of imitation, and the other three constitute the object of dramatic imitation. Nothing is added to these six (elements). Most dramatic poets have used these structural (elements); for it is natural that every play contains elements of spectacle, as well as character, plot, language, song, and thought…" (45)*.

There is an issue that confronts us when studying the qualitative elements in comedy, which we can formulate as: What is that thing that the comic poet imitates—is it the plot, or the character?

Aristotle says: "Comedy—as we mentioned earlier (46)*—is an imitation of persons of a lower type, that is, lower than the ordinary level…" (47)*.

This is an explicit statement in which he attributes the imitation in comedy to character rather than action, which differs from imitation in tragedy, where Aristotle describes it as: "an imitation of a serious action, complete in itself…" (48)*.

Here it becomes clear that he distinguishes between the nature of imitation in each of the two dramatic genres, the comic and the tragic. He describes the nature of the characters whom the comic poet imitates in a precise and detailed description, while he describes the nature of the action which the tragic poet imitates, also in a precise and detailed description.

And Aristotle explains the importance of the order of the elements of plot and character in tragic imitation, saying: “Plot, therefore, is the first principle in tragedy—it is, as it were, the soul of the living body—and then character comes second (…) Thus we confirm that tragedy is essentially an imitation of an action, and if it imitates persons, it is because it imitates action essentially…” (49)*.

Aristotle could have generalized his previous statement to include both comedy and tragedy, for instance by saying (in drama) or (in the play) instead of (in tragedy). This is if we assume that he sees the nature of imitation in drama as one. For the medium of dramatic poetry—as we said earlier—is a language with specific properties, the object of imitation in it consists in men acting, and the manner of imitation in dramatic poetry consists in presenting the character as it performs all its actions in a dramatic manner. If we contemplate the object of dramatic imitation, we will find that it appears one—in terms of the general concept—between both comedy and tragedy, for it is simply (men acting). But—in terms of the specific concept—we find that this expression contains both terms of the issue: (men / characters) and (action / plot). And even though we have presented Aristotle’s explicit opinion that comedy is an imitation of characters, and that tragedy is an imitation of an action, he nevertheless says, in the context of differentiating between poetic truth in drama—in general—and historical truth:

“The comic poet first constructs the events of the plot according to the rule of probability, and then adds the names of the characters from his own invention. This is the opposite of what the old iambic (satirical) poets (50)* used to do, who wrote about real, identifiable individuals by name” (51)*.

This may appear to present a contradiction between Aristotle’s previous statements. For in the last passage, he emphasizes that the poet first constructs the events of the plot! (He is, of course, the refined comic poet. As for the satirical poets, they composed their poems about real individuals, thus they are primitive or old!) Yet at the same time, Aristotle mentions—in an earlier passage—how the comic poet imitates persons of a lower type!

Both opinions, in truth, are correct, if we return to our interpretation of the word imitation in Aristotle. For imitation, as we have said before, is one concept encompassing two consecutive processes: (selection) and (organization). By selection here, we mean: the comic poet selects the human model he wishes to imitate, whether it be a famous personality among people, like the character of Cleon—as in the comedies of Aristophanes—or a general human type—as in the comedies of Menander.

And since comic dramatic poetry is a dramatic treatment first and foremost, and dramatic treatment requires, as Aristotle says:

"the characters as they perform all their actions in a dramatic manner" (52)*.

that is, the presence of the comic character in a state of action. Hence, it is obvious that the dramatic treatment here, or the stage of writing, is the other part of the concept of imitation, and it represents the process of organization. This, in turn, differs from imitation in tragedy, where the tragic poet begins the process of selection with the serious, great action: such as the forbidden marriage after killing the father, as in *Oedipus*; or the refusal to bury the dead, as in *Antigone*; or the mother killing her children, as in *Medea*. These are actions worthy of the tragic poet's imitation.

They are sublime actions of awe-inspiring impact, and they are ready-made in composition, in terms of subject, for they are either of mythological or historical origin. As for the tragic character, despite the nobility of its ethical system, it is not important in itself, because its importance stems from its association with such awe-inspiring actions. In the second process of the concept of imitation—by which we mean organization—the tragic poet is concerned with building a sequence of dramatic situations, either according to the rule of probability or the rule of necessity, for actions most of which are known in advance to the audience. Therefore, character in tragedy is secondary in importance to the plot.

We conclude from all this that imitation in comic poetry is an imitation of lower-type persons, and not an imitation of actions. And these persons are necessarily in a state of action. Therefore, we can order the qualitative elements of comedy as follows: 1- Character (éthos) 2-

Plot (Mythos) 3- Language (Lexis) 4- Thought (Dianoia) 5- Theatrical spectacle (Opsis) 6- Song (Melopoia)

1- Character (éthos): It is—as we have said before—the most important element of comic dramatic poetry from Aristotle's point of view. He means by it: "that which we attribute to the agents, of qualities and traits that determine the quality" of their actions (53)*.

And he advises the dramatic poet in general—comic and tragic alike—when drawing his characters and expressing them dramatically, saying:

"to visualize the events, as far as he can, with every movement of his characters. For if two poets are equal in possessing the same natural talents, the more persuasive one is he who feels the emotions he is imitating. For sorrow and anger, for example, can be depicted by the poet with true representation if he is feeling them at that moment" (54)*.

Moreover, he described imitation in comedy as:

"an imitation of persons of a lower type, that is, lower than the ordinary level, and 'lower' here does not mean every kind of evil and vice, but only a particular kind, namely the laughable, which is a species of the ugly" (55)*.

Leaving aside the discussion of the debates surrounding the Arabic translations concerning the word (lower)—since all of them revolve around one concept, as will become clear—we can grasp the concept of (the lower character) through Aristotle's explicit statement about its qualities:

"the miser with respect to money; the profligate with respect to bodily appetites; the effeminate with respect to what invites laziness and slackness; the coward with respect to dangers—for terror makes him abandon his brothers in peril; the ambitious with respect to his longing for honor; the hot-tempered with respect to anger; the contentious with respect to victory; the spiteful and vengeful with respect to revenge and punishment; the silly and stupid with respect to being deceived about what is right and wrong; the shameless with respect to

his contempt for the opinions of others. And likewise, every other man is unjust with regard to a particular weakness of his own" (56)*.

It is noticeable from the preceding passage that we are faced with a group of human types, each characterized by a particular weakness in its ethical system. This explains to us the expression (persons of a lower type): the comic character is that which is characterized by some moral defect, such as miserliness, profligacy, cowardice, pretentiousness, etc. These are traits that we can judge—from the Aristotelian point of view—by a moral value judgment as being ugly or bad, just as they are, at the same time, laughable (57)*.

2- Plot (Mythos):

Aristotle means by plot:

"the arrangement of the events or things that occur in the story" (58)*.

By this he means that the comic plot is composed of a series of successive situations, arranged in a particular order. And his statement:

"The comic poet first constructs the events of the plot according to the rule of probability" (59)*.

indicates that the rule governing the sequence of events is the rule of probability only, whereas the events of the tragic plot, as regards the logic of their arrangement, stand upon both the rules of probability and necessity (60)*.

And besides the necessity of having the rule of probability as the logic governing the plot's structure, Aristotle sees the necessity of adhering to two other principles when the dramatic poet—comic and tragic—constructs the plot of his play. The first is the principle of unity, about which he says:

"The unity of the dramatic plot (61)* does not consist—as some believe—in having its subject revolve around a single person. For countless things happen to a single person, and it is impossible to reduce them to a unity. From the same standpoint, there are many actions

performed by a single person which cannot be shaped into a single action (…). Therefore, the story—

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as an imitation of an action—must present a single action, complete in its wholeness, and its various parts must be so closely connected that if any part is placed elsewhere or removed, the whole (complete whole) will be disrupted and disturbed; for a thing whose presence or absence makes no perceptible difference or effect is not an organic part of the whole" (62)*.

As for the last of the two principles for constructing a good dramatic plot—comic and tragic—it consists in appropriate length, about which he says:

"A beautiful thing, whether it be a living creature or any object composed of different parts, must not only have those parts arranged in an orderly manner, but must also be of a suitable magnitude; for beauty depends on limitation of size and on arrangement. Hence, an organism that is extremely small cannot be beautiful, because our vision of it is not clear and it is perceived in an almost imperceptible moment of time. Likewise, an animal of excessive bulk—one that is, say, a thousand miles long—cannot

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be beautiful, because the eye cannot take it all in at once, since unity and a sense of the whole are lost to the viewer. Thus, just as a certain magnitude is necessarily required in a living creature and in any whole made up of many parts, so that the eye can encompass it in a single view, so too must the plot necessarily have a certain length, and this length should be easily grasped by the memory" (63)*.

And Aristotle sums up the beauty of the dramatic plot in general—comic and tragic—in his statement: "beauty depends on limitation of size and on arrangement" (64)*.

Additionally, he sees: "the correct and sufficient limit for the plot is the length that allows the hero to pass—through a series of probable events (…) (65)*—from a state of misery to a state of happiness…" (66)*.

He also suggests the double ending for the comic plot. By this type of plot he means the doubling of the line of dramatic action, which is liable to produce two opposing endings, one

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for the good characters and another for the evil characters, where the good are rewarded and the wicked are punished (67)*.

As for the invention of plots among Greek comic poets, we have referred earlier to what Aristotle heard in this regard, when he said:

"… that it began in Sicily with Epicharmus and Phormis. And Crates was the first poet among the Athenians to abandon the iambic or scurrilous satirical form and turn to the treatment of plots of a more general nature…" (68)*.

We can conclude the discussion of plot in comedy with Aristotle's advice to the dramatic poet in general, where he advises him that he must:

"visualize the scenes as actually before his eyes—as much as possible. In this way, seeing everything with perfect clarity—as if he were an eyewitness—will enable him to discover what is appropriate, and at least he will not fail to notice inconsistencies (69)*" (70)*.

3- Language (Lexis): This is the third element of the qualitative elements of comedy.

Aristotle means by it: "the expression of the characters' thoughts by means of words" (71)*.

Despite the extensive study that Aristotle set out on the element of language in his *Poetics*, it is a study that does not assist us in knowing the characteristics of language in comic dramatic poetry (72)*. Yet there is one passage in which Aristotle talks about language in drama in general, then touches upon some special linguistic usages in comedy, saying:

"Excellence of language consists in its being clear without being commonplace. The truth is that the clearest style is that which is composed of ordinary, everyday words, but at the same time it is commonplace (…). On the other hand, language becomes distinctive and far

from being feeble if it employs unfamiliar words, such as: (a) strange (or rare) words, (b) metaphorical expressions, © lengthened words, (d) and everything remote from common modes of expression.

But language composed entirely of such

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words would be: (a) either an enigma, (b) or a barbarous jargon.

By enigmatical language I mean that which is composed of metaphors and transfers; and by jargon, that language which is made up of strange (or rare) words. Indeed, the nature of enigma consists essentially in expressing a fact by words placed in impossible linguistic combinations; this does not occur by using the ordinary names of things, but by using metaphorical substitutes (…). Likewise, language composed entirely of strange (rare) words must produce jargon. Nevertheless, resorting to a certain combination of some of these unfamiliar elements is necessary (for style). For the use of the strange (rare) word, the metaphorical, the ornamental, and the other kinds saves language from the commonplace and the feeble, while the use of ordinary or current words gives it the intended clarity. But what most helps to make language clear while keeping it from being commonplace

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and feeble is the lengthening and shortening of words and the alteration of their form. Building words in this way—making the language deviate from what is common and familiar —gives it an appearance removed from the language of everyday conversation, while its close resemblance to current words gives it the quality of clarity. Hence it is a mistake for some to condemn the use of such licenses or linguistic liberties, and to ridicule the poets who employ them (…). Undoubtedly, the excessive use of these linguistic licenses produces a laughable effect (…). Indeed, the misuse of metaphor, strange (rare) words, and similar figures of speech leads to an effect similar to that laughable effect which some seek to achieve" (73)*.

We can conclude from the above that the ideal poetic language in dramatic poetry in general—both comic and tragic—is one in which a mixture is employed of: 1- Ordinary, everyday words. 2- Unfamiliar words, represented by: (a) rare words. (b) metaphorical

expressions. © words altered by lengthening or shortening. (d) everything remote from common modes of expression.

We also conclude that the laughable effect arises from language, in cases of: 1- The excessive use of unfamiliar words. 2- The misuse of metaphor, rare words, and similar figures of speech.

4- Thought (Dianoia): Aristotle means by this element: “all that is said by the speaker, whether to reveal a general truth or to set forth an opinion” (74)*. Or it is: “the power of saying what can be said, or what is appropriate in the given circumstances” (75)*.

Then Aristotle refers us, for the study of what pertains to thought, to his treatise *Rhetoric*, saying: “As for what concerns thought, let us refer to what we have said about it in our treatise (The Art of Rhetoric), because its nature belongs to that branch. Under thought fall all the effects produced by the use of language. This includes:

(a) proof, (b) refutation, © the excitation of emotions (such as pity, fear, anger, and the like) (76)*, as well as making things appear magnified and important, or trivial and diminished” (77)*.

5- Theatrical spectacle (Opsis): Aristotle says about it: “Although the element of theatrical spectacle has, in truth, its own emotional appeal, it is the least artistic of all the elements (78)* and the least connected with the art of poetry” (79)*.

6- Song (Melopoia): This is the last element of the qualitative elements of comic dramatic poetry. Aristotle omitted defining it, considering it one of the elements known and famous among the common people (80)*.

The Quantitative Parts of Comedy

Comedy consists of six parts (81)* :

1- Prologue (Prologos) “is all that part which precedes the entrance of the chorus” (82)*.

2- Parode (Parodos) “is the entire opening song of the chorus” (83)*.

3- Agon (Agon) “a dialectical debate or verbal contest or a dispute between two individuals over a thorny issue which is the main subject or the axis of the play as a whole. This debate is sometimes used and reaches the point of a quarrel or a laughable verbal clash” (84)*.

4- Parabasis (Parabasis) “is the part in which the chorus steps forward or takes a side to address the audience directly in the name of the poet” (85)*.

5- Episode (Epeisodia) “is all that part which falls between two complete choral songs” (86)*.

6- Exode (Exodos) “is all that part after which there is no choral song” (87)*.

The Sources of Laughter in Comedy

Aristotle says: “Since amusement and every form of relaxation, and laughter, are pleasant things, then laughable things—whether they be persons, words, or actions—are necessarily pleasant” (88)*.

We observe from the preceding passage that the sources of the laughable in comedy—from Aristotle’s viewpoint—are three: 1- Character (éthos). 2- Language (Lexis). 3- Situation (Pragma).

Modern studies that deal with comedy as their subject indicate that there is a fourth stimulus of laughter, namely movement. Perhaps Aristotle did not refer to it, considering that it falls under the element of theatrical spectacle, which depends more on the practitioners of arts related to direction than it does on the dramatic poet (89)*.

The Function of Comic Dramatic Poetry

We mentioned when discussing the element of thought—one of the qualitative elements of comedy—that Aristotle referred us to his treatise *Rhetoric*, justifying this by saying: "Under thought fall all the effects produced by the use of language. This includes: (a) proof, (b) refutation, © the excitation of emotions (such as pity, fear, anger, and the like), as well as making things appear magnified and important (90)*, or trivial and diminished (91)*." (92)*.

We note from the preceding passage that when discussing the excitation of emotions, he confined himself to only three emotions: pity, fear, and anger, in the context of his discussion of the element (thought) in dramatic poetry in general—tragic and comic alike.

And if Aristotle linked the emotions of fear and pity to the theory of katharsis, which represents the function of tragic dramatic poetry, in his *Poetics*, then what is the reason that led him to specifically mention the emotion of anger when discussing the emotions, in the context of studying dramatic poetry in general?

The probable answer here starts from the premise that this

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emotion (anger) must be linked to the subject of dramatic poetry. And if Aristotle did not treat it in his study of tragedy—which has reached us almost complete—it is likely, therefore, that this emotion has a close connection with non-tragic dramatic poetry, which is comedy.

I believe that the best entry into studying the emotion of anger and what pertains to it in detail is to study Aristotle's opinion on the emotions (Pathé) in general.

Aristotle says of the emotions, defining them:

"The emotions are all those changes that make people change their minds concerning their judgments, and they are accompanied by pleasure or pain, such as: anger, pity (93)*, fear, and

all similar emotions and their opposites” (94)*.

We observe from the preceding passage that Aristotle classifies emotions into two types:

- The first: is accompanied by pleasure.
- The latter: is accompanied by pain.

These emotions also affect the judgments of the mind, making people change their judgments. We also note that Aristotle mentioned the same three emotions (anger, pity, fear) excluding others. We can also conclude from the same passage that there are emotions

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that are similar, and others that are opposite. Aristotle proceeds to explain everything that is pleasant and everything that is painful, saying:

“Let us posit that pleasure is a movement of the soul and a sudden, perceptible excitation toward settling into its natural state, while pain is the opposite of that. If pleasure is of this nature, then it is clear that whatever produces the condition we have described (95)* is also pleasant, and that whatever corrupts it or produces the opposite of stability is painful” (96)*.

We can observe from the preceding passage that pleasant emotions—from Aristotle’s viewpoint—prepare the soul to be in a state of stability, while painful emotions lead the soul to a state of instability, which is what makes people change their judgments. It can also be observed that Aristotle’s concept of (stability) places pleasant emotions in complete opposition to painful emotions.

If we move to Aristotle’s definition of anger, where he says:

“Let us define anger as a desire accompanied by pain for revenge, either real or apparent, due to a real or apparent insult that befalls the person himself or one

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of his friends, if this insult is without right” (97)*.

We will find that Aristotle classifies it as a painful emotion, and this leads us to say that it is an emotion opposed to stability, and thus affects the judgments of the mind. Aristotle confirms this opinion by saying:

"Since (being angry) is the opposite of (being calm), and anger is the opposite of calmness, we must show the psychological condition that makes people calm, towards whom they become calm, and the reasons that make them calm…" (98)*.

Aristotle investigates how to rid oneself of the emotion of anger, which is harmful to man, by defining the meaning of calmness of the soul explicitly, saying:

"Let us define calmness as the quieting of anger and the breaking of its surge…" (99)*.

Then he goes on to mention some things and emotions that are capable of removing this painful emotion, which is opposed to stability, for the purpose of restoring the soul to the state of calmness it possessed before the emotion of anger, so that the balance of the mind may be adjusted when issuing its judgments. Aristotle says:

"It is clear that people become calm if their condition is opposite to that which

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provokes anger, as happens when they play, laugh, or celebrate, or when they feel blessed, successful, or content (…) and also when time passes and their anger is no longer acute, for time puts an end to anger" (100)*.

We observe from the preceding passage that the emotion of anger completely vanishes if the angry person encounters another emotion opposed to it, such as: 1- The emotion of laughter, play, or celebration. 2- The feeling of blessing, success, or contentment.

Also, the surge of anger is broken when time separates the angry person from the causes of his anger. We also conclude from the preceding passage that the emotion of anger, which opposes the state of the soul's calmness, is opposed by the emotion of laughter that brings about calmness for the soul. As a result of all that has been mentioned, it can be said that the emotion of laughter is the purgative from the emotion of anger.

And from Aristotle's statement: "Since amusement and every form of relaxation, and laughter, are pleasant things, then laughable things—whether they be persons, words, or actions (101)*—are necessarily pleasant" (102)*.

We can say that laughable things of various types are what necessarily lead to arousing the emotion of laughter, and that

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the emotion of laughter is a pleasant emotion, and it leads to a state of the soul's stability, which is the state in which the mind issues its correct judgments. We also conclude that Aristotle favors the pleasant emotion of laughter, in contrast to his rejection of the painful emotion of anger.

And Aristotle adds—to the above—that: "people also become calm towards those who humble themselves before them and do not contradict them, because these appear to be of a lower rank than theirs" (103)*.

Therefore, we can conclude—from all that has been mentioned about the emotions—that Aristotle sees that there are two factors for purging the angry person from the emotion of anger: 1- Arousing the emotion of laughter within him. 2- His feeling of superiority, blessing, success, or contentment (104)*.

And if we return to Aristotle's statement about comedy: "Comedy—as we mentioned earlier—is an imitation of persons of a lower type, that is, lower than the ordinary level. 'Lower' here does not mean every kind of evil and vice, but only a particular kind, namely the laughable, which is a species of the ugly. The laughable can be defined as

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a mistake or deficiency that causes no pain or harm to others. Take the comic mask that provokes laughter as an illustrative example: it is ugly and distorted, but it causes no pain when we look at it" (105)*.

We note that Aristotle repeatedly uses the expression (laughable) three times. This indicates the importance of arousing the emotion of laughter in the spectator. He also stresses

the meaning of the character's baseness and its inferiority to the common level with his expression (that is, lower than the ordinary level), which indicates the possibility of the spectator's feeling of superiority, blessing, success, or contentment. Then we note his emphasis that the stimuli of laughter should not cause pain or harm to the spectator, because what is painful—as we saw earlier in Aristotle—opposes the state of stability.

And since the two factors (laughter and superiority) are present—as is evident from Aristotle's saying about comedy—the function on which comic dramatic poetry rests is: (purging the spectator of the emotion of anger, by arousing the emotion of laughter within him).

The Definition of Comedy

We note from Aristotle's definition of tragedy (106)* that he reviewed in it four matters: the object of imitation, its medium, its manner, and its function.

And we have seen—throughout this study—that the medium of imitation in comedy is (pleasurable language, possessing rhythm, melody, and song). Its object consists in (men acting), and (an imitation of persons of a lower type, that is, lower than the ordinary level). And its manner consists in (presenting the characters as they perform all their actions in a dramatic manner). The action/plot in comedy is also characterized by unity, order, and the sequence of its parts according to the rule of probability. As for the function upon which comedy rests, it is (arousing the emotion of laughter, and thus effecting the purgation of the emotion of anger).

Finally, it can be said that the definition of comedy—according to Aristotle—could take the following form: Comedy, therefore, is an imitation of persons of a lower type, that is, lower than the ordinary level, by means of an action that is complete in itself, of a certain magnitude, in language that is pleasurable because it is accompanied by every kind of artistic embellishment. Each of these kinds can be found separately in the parts of the play.

This imitation is carried out in dramatic form, not in narrative form, and through things (107)* that arouse

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laughter, thereby effecting the purgation of the emotion of anger. By (pleasurable language) I mean language that possesses rhythm, melody, and song. And by (can be found separately in the parts of the play) I mean that some parts are rendered using verse alone, and others using song (108)*.

Footnotes

(1) See the valuable translation by Professor Dr. Ibrahim Hamada in the introduction to his translation of the *Poetics*.

(2) The word poetry (*Poiétikés*) in Greek is derived from the verb *Poién*, meaning to make, to produce, or to create. Thus, the meaning of the word poetry here is creation and inventiveness.

- See: Appendix of Greek originals No. [2].

(3) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry* – Translation: Dr. Ibrahim Hamada. Cairo: Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop, n.d., p. 95.

- See: Appendix No. [3].
  Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 48, Dr. Badawi p. 18, Butcher p. 23.

(4) Aristotle: *Rhetoric* – Translation: Dr. Abd al-Rahman Badawi. Baghdad: Dar al-Shu'un al-Thaqafiyya, 1982, p. 82.

(5) Ibid., p. 255.

(6) See what Professor Dr. Ibrahim Hamada translated of the article *Peri Kômôdias* (On Comedy), known in scholarly circles as *Tractatus Coislinianus*.

- In: Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, p. 90.

(7) See: Muhammad Hamdi Ibrahim: *A Study in the Theory of Greek Drama*. Cairo: Dar al-Thaqafa for Printing and Publishing, 1977, pp. 101-201.

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(8) The term (imitation *Mimésis*) first appeared—so far as we know—in several writings of Plato (c. 429–347 B.C.), such as: *Ion*, Books III, VII, and X of *The Republic*, and Books II, VII, and VIII of *The Laws*.

The term with him means: distorted copying, for he sees that poetry—or any other art—does not treat the truth, the model, or the ideal *Eidos*, but merely contents itself with imitating the data of the senses, which are themselves merely a distorted imitation of truth. Hence, Plato considers poetry to be two degrees removed from truth, so he attacks poets and describes them as condemned for corrupting the ideals of citizenship, likening them to the orators who led his teacher and friend Socrates (c. 470–399 B.C.) to his death. The dialogue *Gorgias* represents the peak of Plato's anger against the poets.

As for Aristotle, the term *Mimésis* means: artistic imitation that concerns itself with two matters: selection and organization, with the aim of achieving a certain goal in the artist's mind. Hence poetry, for him, is a formulation more perfect and more beautiful than unorganized reality. Poetry, according to Aristotle, falls under the heading of productive or artistic sciences, where the end of these sciences consists in something existing outside the agent, and the agent must realize his will in it.

- See: Appendix No. [8].

(9) We note here that the Roman philosopher Horace (c. 65–8 B.C.) does not differ from what Aristotle mentioned regarding the function of imitation, as Horace says in his book *The Art of Poetry* (*Ars Poetica*):

"Poets aim either to benefit, or to delight, or to arouse pleasure and explain life's lessons at one and the same time." – Arabic translation, p. 132.

(10) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, p. 79.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 36, Dr. Badawi p. 12, Butcher p. 15.

(11) Previous reference, p. 55.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 28, Dr. Badawi pp. 3-4, Butcher p. 7.

(12) We note here Aristotle's influence by his teacher Plato's opinion on this point, as Plato says in Book III of *The Republic*:

"There is, however, one point we can easily recognize: namely that a song or chant has three elements: word, tune, and rhythm."
– Arabic translation, p. 267.

(13) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, p. 57.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 32, Dr. Badawi p. 7, Butcher p. 11.

(14) Previous reference, p. 67.
Comparing translations: we find that Dr. Ayyad (p. 32) translates the word (good) as (better), the word (bad) as (worse), and (persons) as (morals).

- While Butcher (p. 11) translates (goodness) as Goodness, (badness) as Badness – See Appendix No. [14].

We believe that these meanings revolve around one and the same import, and we can present what Aristotle intends at this point by addressing the concept of the good character and its opposite. This we shall discuss in detail when the time comes.

(15) Previous reference, p. 68.

Comparing translations: Dr. Ayyad (p. 34) agrees with what we have mentioned, while Dr. Badawi (p. 9) translates (worse) as (lower), and (better) as (higher).

- Butcher agrees with what we have mentioned, translating (better) as Better, and (worse) as Worse – See Appendix No. [15].

(16) Aristotle: *Rhetoric*. Previous reference, pp. 71-72.

(17) Aristotle differs here completely with his teacher Plato. While Aristotle acknowledges the existence of bad moral models in comic dramatic work, Plato rejects the models of comic characters in a sharp and explicit manner, saying:

"If they must imitate something (meaning the poets), let them imitate those qualities which they ought to possess from their early youth, such as courage, moderation, piety, generosity, and all similar virtues. But they must not practice or imitate moral baseness or any other vice, so that

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they do not move from this imitation to actual habituation to those vices."
– Plato: *The Republic*. Arabic translation, p. 263.

(18) Homer (*Homeros*): the great poet of Greece, to whom the two epics the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are attributed. Based on the language of his writings, specialists presume that he was from Ionia, the region that includes the islands of the Aegean Sea and the western coast of Anatolia, in the land of Greece. As for the era in which he lived, there are conflicting opinions, and specialists have not settled on a definite view.

(19) We note here Aristotle's influence by the views of his teacher Plato, which he set forth in Book III of *The Republic*, where he says: "Poetry and mythology may sometimes consist of imitation only, examples of which are tragedy and comedy; sometimes they may be a narrative told by the poet himself, as in encomia; and the third kind is a mixture of the two, which is found in epic and in many other forms…"
– Plato: *The Republic* – Arabic translation, p. 260.

(20) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, p. 82.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 34, Dr. Badawi p. 10, Butcher p. 13.

(21) *Archon*: the Athenian magistrate who selects the dramatic texts for performance within the framework of the competition, and also selects their sponsor, actors, and chorus.

(22) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, p. 88.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 46, Dr. Badawi pp. 16-17, Butcher p. 21.

(23) Aristotle here does not mean by (dramatic treatment) anything other than the meaning of (indirect treatment), for the following sentence is the key to its interpretation.

(24) *Margites*: an ancient comic epic, and Aristotle expresses here his belief that it is by Homer, which is a subject of discussion among scholars.

(25) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, p. 80.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 38, Dr. Badawi p. 14, Butcher p. 17.

(26) Previous reference, p. 79.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 38, Dr. Badawi p. 13, Butcher p. 15.

(27) Same reference, p. 81.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 42, Dr. Badawi p. 14, Butcher p. 19.

(28) Previous reference, p. 80.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 38, Dr. Badawi p. 14, Butcher p. 17.

(29) Previous reference, p. 80.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 40, Dr. Badawi p. 14, Butcher p. 17.

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(30) Relative to *Doris*, one of the four races of the Greek people.

(31) The inhabitants of the region of Megaris, one of the ancient Greek regions.

(32) Epicharmus: the Sicilian comic poet who lived in the 5th century B.C. Only the titles of some of his plays remain.

(33) Chionides: an ancient Greek comic poet.

(34) Magnes (c. 500–430 B.C.): an Athenian comic poet. Only some titles of his plays remain, such as: *The Gadfly*, *The Birds*, *The Frogs*, *The Lyre Players*, *Lydians*.

(35) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, p. 73.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 34, Dr. Badawi p. 10, Butcher p. 13.

(36) Most modern studies hold that "the origin of comedy, as is clear from its name (which combines the word *Komos*, meaning a procession or a noisy, rowdy rural celebration, and the word *Ode*, meaning song), goes back to the songs and dances that were performed across the Greek countryside during the harvest season, especially the grape-picking associated with the worship of the god Dionysus, the god of wine. Thus, this theatrical art arose from popular religious celebrations in which all classes and groups participated, making it an inseparable part of the life of the city."
– Dr. Ahmed Othman: *Greek Poetry – A Human and World Heritage*, p. 326.

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(37) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, p. 73.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 36, Dr. Badawi p. 11, Butcher p. 13.

(38) Previous reference, p. 73.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 36, Dr. Badawi p. 11, Butcher p. 15.

(39) Phormis: one of the Dorian comic writers and a contemporary of Epicharmus.

(40) Crates: an Athenian comic poet; Aristotle informs us here that he was the first to abandon personal satire as material arousing laughter. We wish to note here that the above name is misspelled in the text; its correct spelling is as given here in the footnote.

(41) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, p. 88.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 46, Dr. Badawi pp. 16-17, Butcher p. 21.

(42) See, for example:
1- Dr. Badawi Tabana: *Literary Criticism among the Greeks*. Cairo: Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop, 1969. 2nd ed., p. 120.
2- C. M. Bowra: *Ancient Greek Literature*. Translation: Muhammad Ali Zaid, Ahmad Salama Muhammad. The Thousand Books series, No. 560.

Cairo: Publications of the Ministry of Higher Education, n.d., p. 100.

Likewise part one of the Cairo edition of Allardyce Nicoll's book, entitled: (*World Drama*), p. 118.

Perhaps the weightiest studies that have dealt with the birth and development of comic poetry among the Greeks—from our point of view—are Reinhold's study entitled "Classical Drama: Greek and Roman," and the study by Professor Dr. Ahmed Othman, entitled "Greek Poetry: A Human and World Heritage," because they rely on historical documents rather than on speculation and supposition. It is agreed upon among most specialized studies that comedies were presented at the festivals of Dionysus, at the beginning of March each year. Three comedies used to be presented in the afternoon of three of the five days of the festival. When the number of competing comic poets increased, five comedies were presented in the afternoon of the five days of the festival.

We wish to note here that Greek comedy passed through three stages in terms of its technical characteristics:

First: The first stage:

That is the stage of Old Comedy (*Palaia Kômôdia*). It flourished from about 486 B.C. until about 400 B.C. It can be said that it is generally characterized by the fact that its structure is based

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on a general political subject, that its ending is happy, and that its laughter relies on sharp critical humor.

– See: Muhammad Hamdi Ibrahim – previous reference, p. 114.

Among the writers of this stage are:

1- Magnes: mentioned earlier. (See Reinhold – previous reference, p. 139 – and we wish to note that we have corrected some of the names mentioned therein according to their pronunciation in Greek.)

2- Cratinus: Athenian, wrote many plays, of which only some titles remain, such as:

– *Archilochoi*

– *Busiris*

– *Storm-Prisoner*

– *Chirons*

– *The Generation of Euneus*

– *Dionysalexandros*

– *Demes*

– *Odysseus and His Companions*

– *Panoptae*

– *Plutoi*

– *Pylaea*

– *The Satyrs*

– *The Seasons*

– *Seriphians*

– *The Delicate Ones*

– *Women of Thrace*

– *The Burned Ones*

– *Trophonius*

– *The Wine Bottle*

– *Women from Delos*. (See: previous reference, p. 139.)

3- Crates: previously mentioned. Nothing remains of his works except the title of his comedy *The Animals*.

4- Pherecrates: Athenian, contemporary of Aristophanes. Only the titles of some of his plays remain, such as:

– *The Ant Men*

– *Chiron*

– *Koriano*

– *Krapatali*

– *The Deserts*

– *Forgotten Men*

– *The Miners*

– *The Old Women*

– *The Horse*

– *Pseudo-Heracles*

– *The Strangers*

– *The Savages*

– *The Slaves' School*

– *The Tyrant*

– *Vigil*

– *The Nobles*. (See previous reference, p. 140.)

5- Eupolis: Athenian comic poet (c. 445–410 B.C.). Only eleven titles of his plays have reached us, namely:

– *Autolycus*

– *Days of the New Moon*

– *Demes*

– *The Flatterers*

– *The Friends*

– *The Goats*

– *The Golden Race*

– *Marikas*

– *Prospaltians*

– *The Shirkers*

– *The Cities*. (See previous reference, p. 140.)

6- Phrynichus: Athenian comic poet. Only eight of his plays remain, namely:

– *Connus*

– *Ephialtes*

– *Hermit*

– *Muses*

– *The Mystics*

– *The Revellers*

– *The Butchers*. (See previous reference, p. 140.)

7- Aristophanes: the greatest poet of Old Comedy in Athens, and the only one among them whose complete plays have reached us. He was an Athenian of the tribe Pandion. He obtained four first prizes, three second prizes, and one third prize in the dramatic festivals.

His plays are divided into two sections: the first belongs to the Old Comedy stage, and the plays are:

– *Daitalés* (second prize), 427 B.C.

– *The Babylonians*, 426 B.C.

– *Drama of the Centaurs*, 426 B.C.

– *The Acharnians* (first prize), 425 B.C.

– *Georgoi*, 424 B.C.

– *The Knights* (first prize), 424 B.C.

– *The Clouds* (third prize), 423 B.C.

– *The Merchant Ships*, 423 B.C.

– *The Wasps* (second prize), 422 B.C.

– *Peace* (second prize), 421 B.C.

– *Daedalus* (?).

– *The Daughters of Danaus* (?).

– *Drama of Niobe* (?).

– *Second Peace*, 420 B.C.

– *Leras* (?).

– *Ephrai* (?).

– *Anagyrus*, around 412/411 B.C.

– *Polyidus*, around 412/411 B.C.

– *The Fryers* (second prize), around 415/414 B.C.

– *The Birds* (second prize), around 414 B.C.

– *Amphiaraos*, 414 B.C.

– *The Heroes*, 413 B.C.

– *Women of Lemnos*, 412 B.C.

– *Lysistrata*, 411 B.C.

– *Thesmophoriazusae*, 411 B.C.

– *Triphales*, 410 B.C.

– *The Phoenician Women*, 409 B.C.

– *Gerotades*, 408 B.C.

– *Plutus (first version)*, 408 B.C.

– *Thesmophoriazusae (second version)* (first prize), 405 B.C.

– *The Frogs* (first prize), 405 B.C.

– *Telemasians*, around 400/405 B.C.

– *The Assemblywomen* (?).

(See: Dr. Lewis Awad: *Texts of Literary Criticism – The Greeks* – Part One. Cairo: Egyptian General Book Organization, 1989, pp. 211-216. We have preferred to transcribe the names from their Greek form into Latin letters to facilitate knowing their pronunciation in the original language.)

Second: The second stage:

That is the stage of Middle Comedy (*Mesê Kômôdia*). It began to spread from about 400 B.C.

It was characterized by obscenity, directed itself toward mocking myths, and scoffing at philosophical and literary works. We can consider the play *Plutus* by Aristophanes as one of the models of Middle Comedy, because the proportion of choral songs in it is noticeably small, its lyrical interludes are not closely linked to the subject of the play, and its subject moves away from politics and approaches myth. Unfortunately, only a few fragments of the plays from this period have reached us – (Muhammad Hamdi Ibrahim: previous reference – p. 117). We have previously mentioned the first section of Aristophanes' plays, which belong to the Old Comedy stage. As for the second section of his plays, it belongs to the Middle Comedy stage, and the plays of

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the second section consist of:

– *The Storks*, 399 B.C.

– *Plutus (second version)*, 388 B.C.

– *Aiolosikon*, 387 B.C.

– *Kokalos*, 387 B.C.

(Dr. Lewis Awad: previous reference, pp. 216-217).

In addition to Aristophanes, we find a few comic poets in the middle stage, namely:

– Antiphanes – Alexis – Epikrates (see: Muhammad Hamdi Ibrahim, previous reference, p. 117).

Third: The last stage:

That is the stage of New Comedy (*Nea Kômôdia*). This stage began around 336 B.C. Its subjects were usually drawn from contemporary social life, its characters were typical, seldom belonging to reality. Gentle humor replaced the biting jokes that were a feature of Old Comedy. Romantic love became prevalent in the plays of the writers of this genre. No trace of the chorus remained in New Comedy, except perhaps if we consider the group of dancers and musicians that interlude its performances as a chorus.

(see: Muhammad Hamdi Ibrahim, previous reference, pp. 119-120).

The technical changes of New Comedy can be studied in:

Lewis Awad: previous reference, pp. 418-434.

“The most important writers of New Comedy are Philemon (361-263 B.C.), (…) who came to Athens in his childhood, and nothing remains of his output, although Plautus, the Roman comic writer, borrowed a great deal from his works. Among its writers also is Diphilus (…), and we possess nothing of his works, which numbered one hundred, although Terence and Plautus borrowed a considerable amount from his works.

But by far the most important writer of this period is Menander (341/2–289/293 B.C.), who was born in Athens (…). Menander was distinguished by realism in the delineation of characters and was unique in the subject drawn from the local reality of Athens in the fourth century B.C.”

(Muhammad Hamdi Ibrahim: previous reference, p. 122).

“He wrote to entertain an age under trial, which did not wish to think deeply about itself. His art was an escape into a strange, romantic world, for he is fond of foundlings, identical twins that cannot be distinguished, noble courtesans, and angry fathers. His plays naturally end with happy endings in which virtue is rewarded.”

(Dr. Ahmed Othman: previous reference, pp. 111-112).

In addition to that, we find that “Menander often resorts to using rapid, very short dialogue when the characters snatch verses line by line. His aim in this may be to oppose the poets of tragedy and to mock them. In particular,

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Menander leaves his spectators the task of delving into character, because he makes the dialogue proceed rapidly—a dialogue that requires a constantly alert spectator so that he can follow and catch the suggestions one after another. A single phrase—extremely short—may push the dramatic action vigorously forward, or may describe a character in a complete manner. Although Menander aims primarily at entertaining the audience, he does not quite forget to provide the moral lesson. The lesson derived from Menander’s theatre in general is

summed up in the fact that forbearance and generosity are the keys to human happiness within the framework of social relations." (Previous reference, p. 357).

Menander wrote more than one hundred comic plays, of which only the following remain:

A- *The Grouch*: the only complete comedy that has survived, discovered in Egypt in 1950.

B- Parts of three other comedies, buried in Egypt for many long years, namely:

1- *The Arbitration*

2- *Glycera, the Girl with the Shorn Hair*

3- *The Girl from Samos*.

C- Nine plays transmitted to Roman drama by both Plautus and Terence.

D- Other titles in their original form:

– *The Brothers*

– *The Eunuch*

– *The Hypocrite*

– *The Hero*

– *The Hated Man*

– *The Phantom*

– *The Flatterer*

– *The Flute Player*

– *The Necklace*

– *The Physician*

– *The Soldier*

– *The Twins*

– *The Self-Lover*

– *Merry Ladies*

– *The Possession of the Maiden*

– *The Woman of Andros*

– *The Self-Tormentor*

– *A Girl in the Temple*.

(See: Reinhold – previous reference, p. 185).

It is worth mentioning that the author of the article entitled (*Peri Kômodias*) divides Greek comedy into three types:

A- Old (*Palaia*): that which is concerned with jests.

B- New (*Nea*): that which abandoned jests and turned toward seriousness.

C- Middle (*Mesê*): which combined both tendencies.

(Muhammad Hamdi Ibrahim: previous reference, p. 114 / footnote).

As for the French critic Boileau (born 1636 A.D.), he divided Greek comedy into two sections:

The first: the Old type: he described it as a biting satire aimed at directing the ridicule of the audience against real persons. He represents Old Comedy with Aristophanes.

The other: the New type: he describes it as a kind that treats imaginary general subjects, and does not aim through them to mock anyone in particular in society. He represented the plays of this section with the output of Menander.

(See: Boileau – *The Art of Poetry*. Third Canto).

(43) Although Aristotle begins, during this passage, by talking about tragedy, yet he soon implicitly adds comedy under the terms (dramatic imitation), (dramatic poets), and (every play). Perhaps he intended through this initial specification, particular to tragedy, to show the degrees of importance in arrangement, especially between the elements of (plot) and (character), a matter we shall discuss in due course.

(44) Our Professor Dr. Ibrahim Hamada translates the word *Parts* as (parts), which is correct in both the Arabic and English translations and preserves the Greek word Aristotle used, namely *Mere* (meaning: parts), whose singular is *Meros* (i.e., part). But we wish to note that the correct scientific term in the Arabic language—used in mathematical, physical, chemical, and other studies—is (elements), as it refers to the sum of disparate and diverse units of different species within a given compound, whereas the word (parts) refers to the sum

of units belonging to one and the same species. Moreover, the combination of elements in a compound conceals the physical nature unique to each element, while the nature of each part of a body appears clear and evident.

Since the qualitative units of comedy are different in species, and the particularity of each element dissolves into the whole work, it is fitting that we translate Aristotle's word *Mere* as (elements). We note here that we have replaced the word (part) with the word (element) in all instances of translation.

(45) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry* – previous reference, pp. 96-97.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 44, Dr. Badawi p. 16, Butcher p. 21.

(46) Aristotle says:
"Since those who imitate imitate men acting, and these men must necessarily be either good or bad …"
– Previous reference, p. 67.

(47) Previous reference, p. 88.

(48) Same reference, p. 95.

(49) Previous reference, p. 98.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 52, Dr. Badawi p. 21, Butcher pp. 27-29.

(50) Relative to the metrical foot *Iambos*, which is the iambic foot composed of a short syllable followed by a long syllable, and the Greek word is of unknown origin.

(51) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, p. 114.

(52) Previous reference, p. 72.

(53) Previous reference, p. 96.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 50, Dr. Badawi p. 19, Butcher p. 25.

(54) Previous reference, p. 164.

(55) Previous reference, p. 88.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 44, where “lower” = baser, Dr. Badawi p. 16, where “baser” = the rifraff, Butcher p. 21, where “persons of a lower type” = Character of a lower – See Appendix No. [14].

(56) Aristotle: *Rhetoric*. Previous reference, pp. 71-72.

We must point out here the importance of the social position of the character, as Aristotle holds that it serves only for persuasion, because it is probable that a person becomes as he was raised.
– See: previous reference, p. 68.

(57) In contrast to the qualities and deeds that Aristotle describes as badness and attributes to the comic character, Aristotle also sets down the qualities of the good character, which are attributed to tragedy, in order to make a clear-cut separation between the two ethical models. Citing the qualities of the latter character helps us understand the world of the comic character and the scope of its concept by knowing its opposite. Aristotle says:
“Justice and courage are indeed greater than estimation, because courage is useful to others in war, and justice is useful in peace as well. Next comes generosity, for the generous man spends freely and does not quarrel for the sake of possessing wealth, which is the chief object of what people desire. Justice is a virtue that gives everyone his due according to the law, while the unjust man claims what belongs to others contrary to the law. Courage makes people perform noble deeds amid dangers, in accordance with what the law dictates and in obedience to it; its opposite is cowardice. Temperance is a virtue by which a person regulates his bodily appetites according to

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what the law commands; its opposite is profligacy. Generosity is a virtue that does good in many matters; its opposite is miserliness. Magnanimity is a virtue by which a person does great and good deeds; its opposite is baseness. Magnificence is a virtue that does nobility by lavish spending; its opposites are small-mindedness and shabbiness. Prudence is the virtue of

right judgment concerning goods and evils."
– Previous reference, p. 64.

We can observe from the above that the opposite qualities of the good character are the very qualities that distinguish the bad character.

It is worth mentioning that Aristotle here not only put his finger on the key to the comic character in Greek works, but also succeeded in abstracting the types of comic character in general. We do not believe that any comic character written before, during, or after Aristotle's life fails to possess some defect of human character within the scope that Aristotle indicated. This is because the collective human mind, in its sound nature, condemns all behaviors characterized by excess and deficiency, which are themselves those behaviors that fall within the realm of mistaken estimation of simple life affairs and issue from one of those character defects.

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(58) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, p. 96.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 50, Dr. Badawi p. 19, Butcher p. 25.

(59) Previous reference, p. 114.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 64, Butcher p. 35.
Dr. Badawi translates this passage (p. 27) as follows:
"This is evident at first glance with regard to comedy, for the poets do not give their dramatic characters just any names, until after they have composed the story from actions that are plausible."

(60) See: previous reference, p. 120.

(61) We note here that Aristotle generalizes his talk about the dramatic plot in general, including the tragic and the comic.

(62) Aristotle: previous reference, p. 112.

(63) Previous reference, pp. 108-109.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 60, Dr. Badawi p. 24, Butcher p. 33.

(64) Previous reference, p. 108.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 60, Dr. Badawi p. 23, Butcher p. 31.

(65) If Aristotle is speaking—in this passage—about the dramatic plot in general, then we have thought it best to cite here what concerns us regarding the comic plot, without causing any disruption

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to the intended Aristotelian meaning throughout the full passage.

(66) Previous reference, p. 109.

(67) "The endings of comic events are always joyful, as banquets and noisy celebrations are held, except for the play (*The Clouds*) which ends with the burning of Socrates' school."
– Dr. Ahmed Othman: previous reference, p. 328.
And see Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, p. 134.
And see translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 80, Dr. Badawi pp. 37-38, Butcher pp. 47-49.

(68) Previous reference, p. 88.

(69) Aristotle here means by inconsistencies those which the comic poet does not intentionally create for a specific dramatic purpose.

(70) Previous reference, p. 164.

(71) Previous reference, p. 99.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 56, Dr. Badawi p. 22, Butcher p. 29.

(72) Dr. Muhammad Saqr Khafaga mentions, in his book *Studies in the Greek Play* (p. 30), that Greek comedy was "composed in a simple literary language, without complexity or verbal embellishments—a frank, clear language containing words from the colloquial dialect that precisely express jokes and obscene insults, a language

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that faithfully depicts the psyche of the people and their thoughts." This statement agrees with Horace's opinion on the nature of comedy's language, where he says: "Just as a comic subject cannot be written in tragic verse, so the feast of Thyestes disdains to be told in the everyday strains that suit comedy" – Horace: previous reference, p. 114.

Furthermore, Dr. Muhammad Hamdi Ibrahim mentions, in his book referred to above (pp. 116, 120), that Aristophanes "invented a special comic language of double-meaning words, special allusions, coined terms, and compounds of strange construction; moreover, his lyrics were characterized by refinement, inventiveness, and imagination, while his dialogue was natural, distinguished by vividness, though his jokes were coarse and bold without being lustful. Aristophanes is among the most skillful writers in jesting and parodic quotation (*Parodia*) (…) Modern comedy—especially with its most famous writer, Menander—differs from Old Comedy (…) in language it inclines more toward simplicity, so much so that it almost resembles prose or the language of everyday conversation."

(73) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, pp. 189-190.

(74) Previous reference, p. 96.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 50, Dr. Badawi p. 19, Butcher p. 29.

(75) Same reference, p. 98.

Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 54, Dr. Badawi p. 21, Butcher p. 29.

(76) We note here that Aristotle explicitly refers us, concerning thought, to his treatise *Rhetoric*. This makes clear that there is a relationship linking three important matters:
1- Thought,
2- Emotions,
3- Judgments of the mind.

This is because thought is the product of a mental process. Moreover, Aristotle includes the excitation of emotions under the heading of thought. Perhaps understanding this tripartite

relationship will help us in studying the theory of reception in Greek comedy from the Aristotelian point of view.

We also note, throughout this passage, Aristotle's enumeration of three emotions: (pity, fear, and anger). If he elucidated—during his treatise on (tragedy)—the relationship between tragic dramatic poetry and the first two emotions, what is the reason for his enumerating the last emotion (anger) at this point in his book on poetry?

We believe that the presence of the word (anger) at this point is not fortuitous; rather, Aristotle placed it because of its close connection with dramatic art. And since he elaborated on tragedy without mentioning this emotion in its folds, we therefore believe that this emotion is closely related to dramatic poetry, non-tragic. And we do not think it falls outside the study of comic dramatic poetry.

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(77) Previous reference, p. 176.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 106, Dr. Badawi p. 69, Butcher p. 69.

(78) We note our replacement of the word (parts) with (elements) from the original translation.

(79) Previous reference, p. 99.
Compare translations: Dr. Ayyad p. 56, Dr. Badawi p. 22, Butcher p. 29.

(80) Most specialized studies in Greek and its literature agree that the element of song was important in Old Comedy, then its role began to diminish in Middle Comedy, until it almost completely disappeared in New Comedy. This can be clearly observed through the three comic models that we will cite when studying the quantitative parts of comic dramatic poetry.

(81) Dr. Muhammad Hamdi Ibrahim holds that "there are plays that contain neither (the parabasis) nor (the agon) and consequently the parts of comedy in general were, like tragedy, four." – Muhammad Hamdi Ibrahim: previous reference, p. 127 (footnote).

(82) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, p. 127.

(83) Previous reference, p. 128.

(84) Dr. Ahmed Othman: previous reference, p. 329.

(85) Previous reference, same page.

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(86) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, p. 127.

(87) Previous reference, p. 128.

We mentioned earlier—when discussing the development of comic dramatic poetry among the Greeks—that comedy passed through three stages. We wish here—to achieve the benefit desired from our study—to present an analysis concerned with the quantitative division of Greek comedy in its various stages, especially since there is no single study in our Arabic language that discusses this matter in an applied manner. The reader may refer to the English original from which we translated this analysis, at Reinhold, pages: (146-149), (171-173), (187-189). We wish to note that we have replaced some names with what suits their Greek pronunciation.

First: A Model from Old Comedy

Play: The Clouds – Nephelai (by Aristophanes):

(See the historical introduction written by Professor Dr. Abd al-Latif Ahmad Ali, as well as the literary introduction written by Professor Dr. Ahmed Othman in: *Min al-Masrah al-Alami* [From World Theatre]. Issue (215). Kuwait: Ministry of Information, 1 August 1987. See also the Arabic translation transmitted from the Greek by Professor Dr. Ahmed Othman, recently, in issue (216) of the World Theatre series referred to above.)

A- Prologue (lines: 1/362):

Strepsiades (his name in Greek meaning: the dodger), that old Athenian noble, was lying

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tossing on his bed, anxious about his debts in which his horse-racing-mad son had entangled him. While Pheidipides was deep in sleep, he talked about the race, at a time when

the father was unable to sink into slumber.

Strepsiades recounts how happy he used to be when he was in the countryside, and how his troubles only began after he married a beautiful woman from the city. For when they were blessed with their child, they quarreled over naming him, as the mother insisted that his name be derived from the word horse. Hence the son was named Pheidipides (a name meaning: little lean horse), and so he grew up a lover of horses.

Suddenly: an idea occurred to Strepsiades. He woke his son as a result. He asked him to enroll in the school of the Athenian philosopher Socrates, in order to learn how to triumph over his opponents (his creditors), after he anticipated that they would file a lawsuit against him because of the debts his son had caused him. He hopes, by studying the art of dialectic, to avoid payment. When Pheidipides refuses, on the pretext that the school will change the color of his skin, Strepsiades decides—regardless of his advanced age—to enroll himself in the school. When he knocks on the door of Socrates' cell, the pupils rebuke him for disturbing the course of their studies. Strepsiades had heard of Socrates' brilliant ideas, and became even more eager to join the school. He sees the pale-faced pupils dispersed individually in different places, studying various subjects. Finally his eye fell on the teacher himself, suspended in a basket from the ceiling of the cell. He had learned that Socrates could not think unless in an unusual

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position. He then announced to Socrates his desire to join the school, hoping to master the art of dialectic so as to be able to avoid paying his debts.

B- Parode (lines: 363/509):

During Socrates' prayer to his special deities (the Void, the Tongue, and the Clouds), the Chorus of Clouds enters—watched by Strepsiades in terror—singing and dancing. Strepsiades learned that they are goddesses who inspire cunning eloquence and tempestuous talk, and likewise aid impostors and cheats. Socrates informs him of their nature, the source of their power, and that Zeus does not exist, only the Clouds. According to Socrates' opinion, they cause rain, thunder, and lightning, not Zeus.

Strepsiades became convinced of this, and swore to renounce all gods except the Clouds, the Tongue, and the Void. Now he is ready to surmount hardships in order to learn the eloquence necessary to overcome his creditors by trickery and cunning. While Socrates poses questions to Strepsiades, the latter answers with his basic desire, which consists in evading his debts; then they both enter the cell.

C- First Parabasis (lines: 510/636):

The Chorus addresses the audience. It expresses Aristophanes' conviction that this play of his is his best production, because it represents the highest level of craftsmanship in comedy writing. The Chorus also expresses how much it takes pride in his art. The Chorus asks the spectators about the worship of the sacred clouds, enumerating their services to the Athenians. Finally it unleashes its attack on the politician Cleon.

D- Episode (lines: 637-888):

Socrates rushes out, exasperated by Strepsiades' stupidity and weak memory. After Strepsiades had been following him, lying on a bed, as Socrates delivered his teachings; it was plain that the old man was not interested in knowledge for its own sake, but only for the material gain that would come to him from knowledge. Therefore his basic interest was focused on studying the Unjust Logic. After a successful lesson on the gender of nouns, Strepsiades is ordered to lie on the bed, to think and contemplate. Meanwhile, bugs attack him, and he screams in pain. After a period of silence, he reveals his hidden thoughts to Socrates: he alone has been able to devise a means to help him deceive his creditors. But Socrates expresses how naive these ideas are and declares his displeasure, then drives him out of the school for his weak memory.

Strepsiades decides to expel his son from the house if he does not join the school. He attempted to teach him some of the knowledge he had acquired. Although Pheidipides believes this behavior is foolish, he nevertheless advances to the school.

E- First Agon (lines: 889/1113):

Right Logic and Wrong Logic debate before Pheidipides, and each exhausts the other, because each has mastered (one of) the pillars of his particular case. Right Logic consists in: truth,

justice, and uprightness. Wrong Logic consists in material superiority and novel means. Each uses expressions that support his point

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of view: while Right Logic is built upon original values, those aiming at honesty, justice, uprightness, order, physical health through athletic exercises, moral principles, good morals, abstaining from vices, and respect for elders, Wrong Logic aims at the new Sophistic qualities: discovering weak points in the law, winning cases through fine speech, probing a person's depths away from weak stances and hot spots, and training in sexual excess, intemperance, and bypassing all details. Pheidipides has learned to speak skillfully using the Right Logic.

F- Second Parabasis (lines: 1113/1130):
The Chorus asks the judges of the comedy competition that the prize be awarded to this play.

G- Episode (lines: 1131/1330):
After several days, Strepsiades comes to inquire about the progress of his son's studies. He learns from Socrates that he is pleased with the son's brilliance. After greeting his son in a daze, Pheidipides displays his ability to comb his hair and to play with words in the manner of the Sophists.

One of the creditors (Pasias) arrives to collect his debt from Strepsiades, who refuses to pay, using the pretext that he made an error in gender (masculine and feminine). Then he leads another creditor (Amynias) outside, availing himself of the simple skill he had acquired.

After a short while, having finished eating, Strepsiades rushes out of his house, howling from pain

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and shattered dignity, for his son Pheidipides had just beaten him.

H- Second Agon (lines: 1321/1453):
Strepsiades and his son argue about the son's right to beat his father. We learn from their conversation that they quarreled over the acceptability of Euripides' poetry, which Pheidipides

defends. The son proves that he was right in beating his father, because his father had beaten him when he was small, and that the father is now passing through his second childhood. The matter ended with Strepsiades' decision that he is defeated. Then Pheidipides sets out to prove that it is just for him to beat his mother as well.

I- Exode (lines: 1453/1510):

What happened was beyond Strepsiades' endurance. He admits that he corrupted his son when he guided him to the path of evil. He rushes to the school and sets about vandalizing and burning it, with the help of his servant, then drives out Socrates and his pupils.

Second: A Model from Middle Comedy

Play: Plutus (by Aristophanes):

1- Prologue (lines: 1/252):

(Scene: a public square in Athens, in front of the house of Chremylus)

A blind man in shabby clothes enters, followed by Chremylus and his slave Cario. It appears that they have been following him for a long time, for Cario has lost patience. Chremylus had consulted the god Apollo

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about the means by which his son might be successful in life. The god commanded him to follow the first man he meets after leaving the temple. It became clear that the man is a dirty old man.

When Cario is seized by despair, he asks why they are following this old man. Chremylus explains to his slave that it is a divine command, and that he must persuade the old man to take hospitality in his home. When they ask the old man about his identity, he tells them, under compulsion, that he is Plutus, the god of wealth.

He had been struck blind as a curse from the god Zeus, who envies the human race, and since that time, the old man has been unable to distinguish the good from the bad; rather, he has been treated unkindly by those who learned his identity among mortals.

An idea occurred to Chremylus: what would happen if Plutus were cured of his blindness? Could he cure human ills?

Plutus hesitates, but is persuaded after Chremylus' insistence and his confirmation that he possesses the power (the spiritual cause of good and evil).

2- Parode (lines: 353/321):

Cario comes with a chorus of simple folk, knowing that Plutus is staying in Chremylus' house and that they will become rich; they dance in open joy.

3- First Act (lines: 322/453):

Chremylus comes out greeting his neighbors. His friend Blepsidemus arrives, who is suspicious of the sudden wealth that has befallen his friend. When Blepsidemus is promised a share of the wealth, he eagerly agrees to help Plutus recover his sight. The two friends decide to take Plutus to the temple of

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Asclepius, the god of healing. Suddenly, a hideous-looking woman enters: she is Penia, the goddess of Poverty; the two friends are terror-stricken when they learn her identity.

4- Agon (lines: 454/636):

Chremylus and the goddess of Poverty debate over which of them is more beneficial to mankind: she or Plutus. He shows her that Plutus will reward only the good and avoid the wicked, if his sight can be restored. And that he will make everyone honest and rich. As for hunger, filth, and poverty, they are no blessings to mankind.

The goddess of Poverty decides that if that happened, no one would want to work, there would be no slaves, and good things would not exist. Moreover, the rich would be worthless, since hunger and poverty are necessary to drive man's concern forward and are a source of blessings.

As for wealth, it leads in turn to degeneration, which leads to injustice. The goddess of Poverty withdraws from the debate, sensing undisguised defeat, and can only threaten.

Chremylus and Blepsidemus hurry, taking Plutus to where the temple of Asclepius is located.

(Lyrical interlude)

5- Second Act (lines: 637/770):

Cario returns with good news and announces to Chremylus' wife that the healing cure has been found and that Plutus will recover his sight.

(Lyrical interlude)

6- Third Act (lines: 771/801):

Plutus returns, happy for having recovered his sight, and therefore he will establish the ideal city.

(Lyrical interlude)

7- Fourth Act (lines: 803/958):

A man enters, overwhelmed with happiness for the first time, to thank the god and give him his old cloak and torn sandal. Then the informer enters, his wealth lost, now without work.

(Lyrical interlude)

8- Fifth Act (lines: 959/1096):

An old woman comes, trying to appear young, to see Plutus, because her lover has abandoned her after she lost her wealth. Then the young man enters and displays his disgust toward her in effrontery.

(Lyrical interlude)

9- Exode (lines: 1097/1209):

Hermes enters. He explains that the gods have lost their sway, and humans no longer offer them sacrifices and prayers. Hermes almost perishes from hunger, and there is no longer any benefit to the evil tricks he used to succeed in performing. So he had no choice but to flee to the new god.

Plutus appears, followed by the old woman, who is confident that the young man will return to her.

Events unfold, with Plutus enthroned on the Acropolis.

Third: A Model from New Comedy

Play: The Arbitration (Epitrepontes) by Menander

Background:

Pamphile, the daughter of the Athenian businessman Smicrines, had the misfortune of having her honor violated by a drunken youth during one of the festival nights. Then, a few months later, she married an Athenian youth named Charisius. After five months, while the husband was out of the city, Pamphile gave birth to a child. The husband soon learned of the child from his slave Onesimus.

The young man, who loves his wife dearly and is interested in philosophy and ethics, turns away to an affair with the harpist Habrotonon, and begins to lead a life of rebellion and excess. When Smicrines learns of his son-in-law's behavior, he tries to persuade Pamphile to leave her husband, but fails.

Daphos finds a child and gives it to the coalman Syriscus.

Act One:

(A large part of its beginning is lost; it probably contained an expository discussion of the above basic information.)

Cario—the cook of Chaerestratus, Charisius' neighbor—cunningly asks Onesimus the reason why his master left his home to spend his time in pleasure with Habrotonon at Chaerestratus' house.

Chaerestratus enters and finds Smicrines furious at hearing of Charisius' extravagance, fearing he will dissipate his daughter's dowry.

Smicrines speaks to his daughter, while Chaerestratus goes out to inform Charisius of his father-in-law's presence.

Act Two:

Smicrines reappears, in a state of extreme anger at Charisius. The two slaves enter: Syriscus—

Chaerestratus' slave—and Daphos. Then Syriscus' wife enters carrying a child.

The two slaves debate the right to possess the necklace and small jewels found with the child. Smicrines agrees to mediate the dispute. Daphos declares that he found the child among the fields and gave him to Syriscus—whose own child had died a short while ago. Syriscus speaks in an attractive manner as if he were an experienced lawyer, concluding that the little jewels must remain with the child, a decision that causes Smicrines to leave.

Act Three:

Onesimus is compelled to show the ring to Charisius, because he knew it would reveal him as the father of the foundling.

The problem deepens when Habrotonon enters, furious because Charisius no longer pays her any attention. When she learns about the ring, she claims that she was present at the festival last year, where a beautiful wealthy girl was raped; then she conceives a ruse to help her

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win Charisius. She tells him that he is the father of the foundling, shows him the ring, and pretends that she is the raped girl.

Smicrines returns, extremely angry at what he has learned of Charisius' extravagance. At the same time, Habrotonon's ruse works perfectly, since Charisius has learned that the child could be his son.

After the celebration held at Chaerestratus' house ends, Smicrines learns about the child and believes him to be Habrotonon's son. Thus Charisius resolves to buy the slave Habrotonon from her master to free her.

Both Simias—Charisius' friend—and Chaerestratus try to soothe Smicrines, who insists on taking his daughter home and filing for divorce.

Act Four:

Smicrines speaks to his daughter Pamphile and is astonished that she is unwilling to separate

from her husband; though she is displeased with Charisius' conduct, she considers marriage a bond that cannot be broken.

Smicrines leaves, extremely angry. Habrotonon enters with the child; Pamphile looks at him with anguish and realizes the child is her son. Habrotonon confirms that Charisius is the father. The two women then enter Pamphile's house. At the same time, Charisius feels unworthy of Pamphile's loyalty and suffers from remorse over his

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actions toward her.

Onesimus enters, fearing blame, and hides. Charisius then comes, soliloquizing, expressing his sense of loss and Pamphile's nobility.

Habrotonon enters and tells him she is not the mother of the child. As she explains that he was the victim of a trick, Charisius becomes incensed. Onesimus blames Habrotonon for being weak.

Here Habrotonon reveals the whole truth: the child is Pamphile and Charisius' son.

Act Five:

(Habrotonon and Onesimus both gain their freedom. When Smicrines is summoned, he becomes angry upon hearing of the reconciliation between his daughter and Charisius.)

Onesimus mocks Smicrines, exulting in the freedom he has gained because the child is his grandson. Thus the play ends with a happy ending.

(88) Aristotle: *Rhetoric*. Previous reference, p. 81.

(89) The study of Dr. Muhammad Hamdi Ibrahim—previously mentioned—holds that the sources of the laughable in comedy are only two: the verbal and the situational (p. 150), and it confuses situation and action as two sources of the laughable – see paragraph © pp. 154-155.

(90) The magnified matters—from our interpretive point of view—are represented in

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the sublime matters embodied in the tragic action.

(91) The trivial, diminished matters—also from our interpretive point of view—are represented in the petty and trivial matters embodied in the low actions that issue from the lower character, in comic dramatic poetry.

(92) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, p. 176.

(93) (Mercy) here is a synonymous translation for the word (pity) which appeared in our Professor Dr. Ibrahim Hamada's translation.

(94) Aristotle: *Rhetoric*. Previous reference, pp. 103-104.

(95) Here Aristotle means: the state of stability.

(96) Previous reference, p. 75.

(97) Previous reference, p. 104.

(98) Previous reference, p. 110.

(99) Same reference, same page.

(100) Previous reference, p. 111.

(101) Note that they altogether represent the sources of the laughable in comedy.

(102) Previous reference, p. 81.

(103) Previous reference, p. 110.

(104) Dr. Zakaria Ibrahim, in his serious study: *The Psychology of Humor and Laughter* (p. 145), holds that "the origin of laughter is our feeling of superiority, ascendency, or distinction. This theory has been repeated since (Thomas Hobbes) by Stendhal, Benjamin, Grosseteste, Descartes, Spinoza, Baudelaire,

---

Marcel Pagnol, and others…"

(105) Aristotle: *The Art of Poetry*. Previous reference, p. 88.

(106) See: previous reference, p. 95.

(107) See: body text (88) in this study.

(108) We have chosen to use Aristotle's definition of tragedy, deleting everything specific to it and replacing it with what is specific to comic dramatic poetry, while retaining everything common to the two types of dramatic poetry.

Appendix of Greek Originals

(1) Proper Names

Footnote	Greek Script	Latin Script	Arabic Script
1	Αριστοτελης	Aristotelés	أرسطوطاليس
8	Πλάτων	Plátôn	أفلاطون
8	Σοκρατης	Sokratés	سقراط
18	Όμηρωσ	Homerôs	هوميروس
21	Αρχων	Archôn	أرخون
32	Επίχαρμος	Epicharmos	إبيخاروس
33	Χιωνίδεσ	Chiônides	خيونيديس
34	Μάγνης	Magnés	ماجنس
39	Φόρμισ	Phormis	فورميس
40	Κράτης	Krátés	كراتيس
42	Κρατινυσ	kratinus	كراتينوس
42	Φερεκρατισ	Pherekratis	فيريكراطيس
42	Ευπολισ	Eupolis	إيبوليس
42	Φρύνιχυσ	Phrynichus	فرينيخوس
42	Αριστοφαν	Aristophanes	أريستوفانيس

Footnote	Greek Script	Latin Script	Arabic Script
42	Αντιφανεσ	Antiphanés	أنتيفانيس
42	Αλεξισ	Alexis	أليكسيس
42	Επικρατεσ	Epikrates	إبيكراتيس
42	Φελεμον	Philemon	فيليمون
42	Δίφιλοσ	Diphilos	ديفيلوس
42	Μενανδερυσ	Menanderus	ميناندروس
87	Απόλλων	Apollôn	أبوللون

(2) Most Important Expressions and Passages

[2] The original title of the book is: (ΠΕΡΙ ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚΗΣ) Pronounced in Latin: *Peri Poiétikés*, and the precise translation is: *On Poetry*. From the word (ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚΗΣ – *Poiétikés*), which means poetry, derives the word (ΠΟΙΗΤΗΣ – *Poiétés*), i.e., poet.

[3] Περὶ μὲν οὖν τῆς ἐν ἑξαμέτροις μιμητικῆς καὶ περὶ κωμῳδίας ὕστερον ἐροῦμεν, …

[8] Imitation – (Μίμησις – *Mimésis*)

[14] Ἐπεὶ δὲ μιμοῦνται οἱ μιμούμενοι πράττοντας, ἀνάγκη δὲ τούτους ἢ σπουδαίους ἢ φαύλους εἶναι (τὰ γὰρ ἤθη σχεδὸν ἀεὶ τούτοις ἀκολουθεῖ μόνον, κακίᾳ γὰρ καὶ ἀρετῇ τὰ ἤθη διαφέρουσι πάντες), ἢ τοι βελτίονας ἢ καὶ ἡμᾶς ἢ χείρονας…

We note from the preceding passage that Aristotle’s expression uses the word (φαύλους – *Phaulous*)

which means: low, contemptible, bad, base, vile. Likewise for the word (κακίᾳ – *Kakia*), which revolves around the same low ethical system, meaning: evil, cowardice, vileness, baseness, badness. The ethical interpretation of these words is confirmed by Aristotle's expression using the word (ἀρετῇ – *Areté*), which means virtue. Consequently, the words (βελτίονας – *Beltionas*) and (χείρονας – *cheironas*) are interpreted as lower, on the basis that superiority and inferiority lie in the ethical system, not in the social class system. We conclude from the above that the differences found in the Arabic translations are formal, revolving around one and the same ethical meaning.

[15]

ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ δὲ διαφορᾷ καὶ ἡ τραγῳδία πρὸς τὴν κωμῳδίαν. ἡ μὲν γὰρ χείρους ἡ δὲ βελτίους μιμεῖσθαι βούλεται τῶν νῦν.

(45)

- Character: (ἦθος) *éthos*.
- Plot: (μῦθος) *Mythos*.
- Language: (λέξις) *Lexis*.
- Thought: (διάνοια) *Dianoia*.
- Spectacle: (ὄψις) *Opsis*.
- Song: *Melopoia* (Μελοποιία).

[47]

'Η δὲ κωμωδία ἐστὶν ὥσπερ εἴπομεν μίμησις φαυλοτέρων μέν, οὐ μέντοι κατὰ πᾶσαν κακίαν…

[59] Probability – (εἰκός) *Eichos*

Aristotle also uses this word in his *Rhetoric* to mean: the proposition that is true in most cases.

[71] (λεχτικός) *Lechtichos*

A term by which Aristotle means what is attributed to everyday language and the idiom of daily conversation.

[95] Emotion – (πάθος) *Pathos*

Aristotle also mentioned this word in his *Rhetoric* to refer to the meaning of (a mental state).

Hence we see that he links a person's emotion with his mental state and consequently his judgment of things.

[106] Catharsis – (Κάθαρσις) *Katharsis*

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< Completed with the praise of God >

By the Author

- *The Theatre of Naguib Surur: The Dramatic Employment of Folk Literature Forms* (*مسرح نجيب سرور: التوظيف الدرامي لأشكال الأدب الشعبي*). Cairo: Madbouli Bookshop, 1989.

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ARISTOTLE'S THEORY OF COMEDY

By

ESSAM ELDIN ABO ELELLA

Cairo 1993

Madbouli Bookshop

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Synopsis

The author, believing that Aristotle was the first to study theatre and that the theories he made are reflections of his general philosophy, represents this study in an attempt to yield, through Aristotle's quotations, the study of Greek comedy, and the descriptive method, what he believes to be Aristotle's definition of comedy. To achieve his goal, the author divides his work into two major parts; the first is the study itself, to reach his conclusions with minimal interruptions, leaving all the other opinions, theories, quotations, examples, etc. to the NOTES where he discusses them.

The study is based on Aristotle's quotations, except for that topic of "The divisions of the comic play," when quotations of Prof. Ahmed Etman's "*The Greek Poetry, a Human and International Heritage*," are used. The author refers to the modern studies, especially those dealing with the emergence and development of comedy and tracing the divisions of the comic play, and gives examples from the old, middle, and modern comedy taken from Reinhold's "*Classical Drama: Greek and Roman*." The author defines all the works and names mentioned in the *Poetics* according to *The Classical Dictionary*. He also depends on *The Republic* of Plato and *The Art of Poetry* of Horace to show their points of agreement and disagreement with Aristotle's opinions.

The author leaned on Prof. Ibrahim Hamada's translation, from English, of the *Poetics* for its language and expression accuracy and the translator's profession as a critic. Two other Arabic translations, from Greek, by Dr. Abdul Rahman Badawi and Dr. Shokri Mohamed Ayad, in addition to Butcher's English translation, from Greek, had their points of agreement and disagreement with Prof. Hamada's translation, so the author uses the Greek text as a base of the comparison of all the above mentioned translations. The author uses Dr. Abdul Rahman Badawi's Arabic translation of *The Rhetoric*.

The author adds an appendix of the Greek names and those controversial quotations of Aristotle.

The author starts the study proving that Aristotle wrote a complete chapter on comedy in THE POETICS, depending on quotations from *The Poetics* and *The Rhetoric*. The study is dealt with through seven topics:

- The nature of comedy.
- The emergence and development of comedy.
- The aspects of comedy.
- The divisions of the comic play.
- The sources of laughableness in the comic play.
- The function of Comedy.
- The definition of comedy.

The nature of comedy:

The author quotes Aristotle's opinion about imitation and how he differentiates between the styles of imitation through the Medium, Object and Manner.

The emergence and development of comedy:

Here the author discusses how Aristotle was not satisfied with the opinions he knew about the emergence and development of comedy, so he came to the result: The lampooners became writers of comedy, and a poem of the satirical kind cannot be put down to any author earlier than Homer. On the other hand, the author of the study refers to the modern studies, in NOTES, as a try to complete the study of this topic.

The aspects of comedy:

The author studies complete quotations of Aristotle on the: Character (éthos), Plot (mythos), Diction (lexis), Thought (dianoia), Spectacle (opsis), and Song (melopiia), and explains that the Character is the most important aspect to Aristotle. Then through *The Rhetoric*, he reaches the nature of the comic character.

The divisions of the comic play:

Through the modern studies, the author states that the divisions of the comic play are:

1- Prologos 2- Parodos
3- Agon 4- Parabasis
5- Epeisodia 6- Exodos

then in NOTES, he defines each of them and studies them through the *Clouds* of Aristophanes (old comedy), *Plutus* of Aristophanes (middle comedy), and *Arbitration* of Menander (modern comedy).

The sources of laughableness in the comic play:

The author states the Aristotle's explanations, in *The Rhetoric*, of the three sources of laughableness:

éthos	Character
lexis	Diction
pragms	Situation

The function of comedy:

After examining Aristotle's conception of thought and the three emotions, pity – fear – and anger, mentioned in *The Poetics*, the author reaches the function of comedy as "the purgation of the audience from anger by arousing the emotion of laugh."

The definition of comedy:

As Aristotle based his definition of tragedy on four elements:

- The object of imitation in tragedy.
- The medium of imitation in drama.
- The manner of imitation in drama.
- The function of tragedy,

The author replaces the first and the fourth elements by

- The object of imitation in comedy.
- The function of comedy,

that were studied earlier in the study to reach the definition of comedy as

“Comedy, then, is an imitation of characters of a lower type, through a complete action, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through laughter effecting the proper purgation of anger. By language embellished I mean language into which rhythm, harmony and song enter. By the several kinds in separate parts I mean, that some parts are rendered through the medium of verse alone, others again with aid of song.”

Essam Saad
Cairo 2 / 9 / 92

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SYNOPSIS*

The author, believing that Aristotle was the first to study theatre and that the theories he made are reflections of his general philosophy, represents this study in an attempt to yield, through Aristotle’s quotations, the study of Greek comedy, and the descriptive method, what he believes to be Aristotle’s defination of comedy. To achieve his goal, the author, divides his work into two major parts, the first, is the study itself, to reach his conclusions with minimal interruptions, leaving all the other opinions, theories, quotations, examples, etc to the NOTES where he discusses them…

The study is based on Aristotle's quotations, except for that topic of " The divisions of the comic play", when quotations of Prof. Ahmed Etman's " The Greek poetry, a human and international heritage ", are

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- All the techincal terms used in Synopsis are based on : Butcher S.H., Aristotle's theory of poetry and fine art. New York: Dover publishers ink, 1951 4th ed.

نظرية أرسطو طاليس في الكوميديا

هذا الكتاب

تقدم مكتبة مدبولي للقراء العربية أول دراسة علمية جادة، تتناول "نظرية أرسطو طاليس عن الكوميديا" في أصولها، وهو ما لم تتطرق إليه الدراسات الأوروبية إلا لماما، ولم تتطرق إليه الدراسات العربية من قبل.

وإلى جانب إنشاء المؤلف لهذه النظرية، إلا أن هوامش الدراسة غنية بالدراسات الفرعية الهامة، مثل: مقارنة الترجمات العربية المختلفة لكتاب "عن الشعر" لأرسطو طاليس، مقارنة نظرية أرسطو طاليس عن الكوميديا بآراء كل من أفلاطون وهوراس، آراء الدراسات الحديثة في هذا الموضوع، رصد تعريف شامل لكل ما ورد من أسماء وتعبيرات أوردها أرسطو طاليس في كتابه "عن الشعر"، وتقديم تحليل يعنى بالأجزاء الكمية للمسرحية الكوميدية في مراحلها الثلاث.

هذا إلى جانب إيراد المؤلف للملحق للأصول الإغريقية من الأعلام وأهم التعبيرات والفقرات التي أوردها أرسطو طاليس في كل من كتابيه "عن الشعر" و"الخطابة" ولم ينس المؤلف أن يلحق دراسته بأهم المراجع التي تتطرق حول الدراما الإغريقية بعامة والكوميديا بخاصة التي كتبها أصحابها في اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية، حتى يفيد الباحث منها الإفادة المرجوة.

مكتبة مدبولي

Translation of the back cover and promotional page:

Aristotle’s Theory of Comedy

This Book

Madbouli Bookshop presents to Arabic readers the first serious scholarly study that addresses “Aristotle’s Theory of Comedy” in its origins—a subject that European studies have only barely touched upon, and that Arabic studies have never addressed before.

In addition to the author’s construction of this theory, the study’s footnotes are rich with important subsidiary studies, such as: a comparison of various Arabic translations of Aristotle’s *Poetics*; a comparison of Aristotle’s theory of comedy with the views of both Plato and Horace; the opinions of modern studies on this subject; a comprehensive definition of every name and expression Aristotle mentioned in his *Poetics*; and the presentation of an analysis concerned with the quantitative parts of the comic play in its three stages.

Besides this, the author provides an appendix of the Greek originals of names and the most important expressions and passages mentioned by Aristotle in both his *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*. Nor has the author forgotten to append to his study the most important references that deal with Greek drama in general and comedy in particular, written by their authors in both Arabic and English, so that researchers may benefit from them as desired.

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About the Author

Essam El-Din Abu El-Ela (born January 3, 1962) is an Egyptian writer, critic, drama researcher, and academic professor. His full name is Essam El-Din Hassan Abu El-Ela Hussein.

Born in Old Cairo, Cairo, in January 1962, he obtained his Bachelor's degree from the Higher Institute of Theatrical Arts in 1987 with a grade of "Very Good" (ranking first in his class). He earned a postgraduate diploma from the same institute at the Academy of Arts in Cairo in 1990. He then received his Master's degree in Drama and Theatrical Criticism in 2000 with a grade of "Excellent". In 2005, he was awarded his Doctorate (PhD) in Drama and Theatrical Criticism from the Academy of Arts in Cairo with First Class Honors.

He has authored more than ninety short studies, all published in specialized and semi-specialized periodicals in Cairo, most notably: *Theatre Magazine* (مجلة المسرح), *Cairo Magazine* (مجلة القاهرة), *Teatro Magazine* (مجلة تياترو), and the *Cairo International Festival for Experimental Theatre Bulletin* (نشرة مهرجان القاهرة الدولي للمسرح التجريبي). For many years, he participated in editing the bulletin and selecting performances for the festivals of the Egyptian Association for Theatre Amateurs. He also co-edited the bulletin of the Cairo International Festival for Experimental Theatre from 1991 until he stepped down in 1995.

He participated in the first scientific conference of the First Arab Theatre Festival, organized by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture in Cairo, with a research paper titled *Towards a Popular Theatre* (نحو مسرح شعبي). He participated in the activities of the Menofia University Festival commemorating the great poet Abdel Rahman al-Sharqawi with a research paper titled *The Romanticism of Young Mahran* (رومانتيكية الفتى مهران). For many years, he participated in seminar, screening, and judging panels at the Theatre Directorate of the General Authority for Cultural Palaces, School Theatre, Youth and Sports Theatre, and University Theatre.

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8. *What is Drama* (ما الدراما) – Egyptian General Book Authority – 2022.

Short and Medium Studies

He has published dozens of short and medium-length studies since 1988 in journals including: *Cairo* (القاهرة), *Theatre* (المسرح), *Folk Arts* (الفنون الشعبية), *New Culture* (الثقافة الجديدة), *Theatre Horizons* (آفاق المسرح), *Teatro* (تياترو), and *Our Theatre* (مسرحنا).

Book Introductions

1. Introduction to the play *Mother of the Axe* (أم الفاس) by the Saudi writer Malha Abdullah.
2. Introduction to the book *The Impact of Bedouin Life on Theatre in Saudi Arabia* (أثر البداوة على المسرح في السعودية) by the Saudi writer Malha Abdullah.
3. Introductions to plays for various volumes of the *Literary Illuminations* (إشراقات أدبية) series – Egyptian General Book Authority.

4. Introduction to and editing of Volumes 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the *Complete Works of Naguib Surur* (الأعمال الكاملة لنجيب سرور) – Egyptian General Book Authority.
5. Introduction to the play *Ali Baba* (علي بابا) by Tawfiq al-Hakim – Egyptian General Book Authority.

Dramatic and Creative Writings

1. *A Husband's Love Affairs* (غراميات زوج) – A comedy in two acts – 1995.
2. *The Absent* (الغائب) – A one-act drama – published in *Theatre Horizons* magazine.
3. *The Age of Chaos* (زمن الفوضى) – A dramatic elegy in one act.
4. *Paradise of the East* (فردوس الشرق) – A 30-episode radio drama series broadcast by the Cultural Program Radio in 2009, starring: Galal El-Sharkawy, Manal Salameh, and a group of Egyptian radio drama stars; Music by: Michel El-Masry, Directed by: Ragab El-Halawani.

Academic and Professional Career

- **Demonstrator**, Department of Drama and Criticism, Higher Institute of Theatrical Arts (appointed July 27, 1989).
- **Assistant Lecturer**, Department of Drama and Theatrical Criticism (appointed 1998).
- **Lecturer**, Department of Drama and Theatrical Criticism (appointed 2005).
- **Associate Professor**, Department of Drama and Theatrical Criticism (appointed 2010).
- **Head of the Department of Drama and Theatrical Criticism** (from 2010 until he resigned from the chairmanship in November 2017).
- **Professor**, Department of Drama and Theatrical Criticism (appointed May 2020).
- **Member of the Permanent Promotions Committee** in the fields of Drama and Theatrical Criticism at the Academy of Arts.
- **Head of the Department of Drama and Theatrical Criticism** (from July 2020 until he resigned from the chairmanship in February 2021).

He has supervised and examined numerous Master's and Doctoral (PhD) theses at the Academy of Arts, Alexandria University, Menofia University, Ain Shams University, Zagazig University, Benha University, and Mansoura University.

In addition to teaching in the three departments at the Higher Institute of Theatrical Arts at the Academy of Arts in Cairo and the Academy of Arts unit in Alexandria, he taught at the Faculty of Mass Communication, Cairo University for several years, and the Department of Drama and Theatrical Criticism at the Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University for several years. He has also been teaching undergraduate and postgraduate courses at the Higher Institute of Folk Arts for many years, and taught at the Higher Institute of Child Arts.

He worked on play reading panels at the Theatre Directorate of the General Authority for Cultural Palaces for many years, as well as radio drama reading panels at the Radio Sector in Maspero for several years before stepping down. He currently serves on the play reading committee at the Artistic House of Theatre under the Egyptian Ministry of Culture.